REMARKS

Claims 20-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. (US 6,379,017) in view of Kuratomi et al. (US 6,791,566). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, because the cited references, even if combined, still would not disclose or suggest that *the curved reflecting surface is formed so that a light incident from the one side end face is reflected totally on the curved reflecting surface of a neighborhood of the first light source and a light incident from the other side end face is reflected totally on the curved reflecting surface of a neighborhood of the second light source*, as now described in claim 20.

In Fig. 14 of Nakabayashi, the light from the light source 1 exits the light guide member 30 through opposite surfaces, some towards the reflection plate 4 on the flat side and some towards the observer on the curved or sloped side. Light reflecting from the reflecting plate 4 reenters the light guide member 30 and exits through the slope 131 of the light guide member (see, for example, col. 9, lines 62-67).

If the two light guide members 203 in Fig. 23C of Nakabayashi were replaced with the light guide member 30 of Fig. 14, the resulting device would have lights from the light sources 212 and 211 exiting through both of the opposite surfaces, as taught in Fig. 14 of the reference. Accordingly, the combined device would not include a curved reflecting surface formed so that all light incident from the side end faces are reflected totally on the curved reflecting surface, as now required in the claims.

Moreover, the suggested combination of references also would not disclose or suggest that the curved reflecting surface is formed so that a light incident from the one side end face is reflected totally on the curved reflecting surface of a neighborhood of the first light source and a light incident from the other side end face is reflected totally on the curved reflecting surface of a neighborhood of the second light source, as now described in claim 20.

Further, Fig. 14 of Nakabayashi teaches that the thickness of the light guide member 30 away from the light source 1 becomes smaller towards the end away from the light source 1. Therefore, if the light guide member 30 of Fig. 14 were combined with the light guide member 203 shown in Fig. 23C of Nakabayashi, the thickness of the two ends that join in the middle of the light guide plate and away from the light sources would be smaller in the central part of the light guide member and greater at the end portions near the light sources. As such, the combination would not include the claimed curved reflecting surface which is formed so that the thickness of the light guide plate is smaller at both end faces and becomes greater in a central part thereof, as required in the claim. The claims are believed to be allowable for this reason also. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if a telephone conference would expedite prosecution.

If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R.

§1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

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November 23, 2009

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